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# Inside Information

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of Agriculture

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## ILLINOIS DA GETS NEW INFORMATION CHIEF

Mark Randal has been appointed as the new chief information officer for the Illinois Department of Agriculture.

He previously served as a news broadcaster and farm editor at WICS-TV in Springfield, Ill.

In making the appointment, Illinois Director of Agriculture Larry Werries said he was impressed with Randal's agricultural background and electronic media experience.

Randal succeeds John Ochs who recently joined the staff of U.S. Secretary of Agriculture John R. Block in Washington, D.C.

## SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE TO VISIT EUROPE

Secretary of Agriculture John R. Block will confer with European agricultural leaders in late May and early June.

He also will speak at the World Food Council in Belgrade, Yugoslavia.

John Ochs, the Secretary's press aide, said Block will visit six countries during the 12-day trip beginning around May 24.

Secretary Block's meetings with other government leaders will cover trade problems and U.S. objectives in markets that in 1981 will import about \$20 billion in U.S. farm products.

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## "REACHING OUT" TELLS EXTENSION STORY

Like a pebble splashing into a still pond, the work of a county extension agent starts unobtrusively, gradually reaching out to touch more and more people.

Kansas State University's Cooperative Extension Service recounts in a new publication the ways a handful of people in a single county learned to handle some specific needs with the help of their county Extension agents.

"Reaching Out" is a special report which reflects the ways county agents influence the lives of Kansans in all 105 counties.

"The sheer numbers of programs offered, the diverse teaching methods used and the many clientele served, make difficult telling the whole story of the Cooperative Extension Service," says Gary Vacin, KSU Extension editor.

"Rather than reciting a list of all the beneficial talks Extension professionals perform for cooperators in Kansas, sometimes it's better to give a few good examples. "That's what 'Reaching Out' does," he adds.

Vacin believes the report will have several uses.

The primary audience is people who have little or no idea what happens as a result of Extension programs.

"But we hope the report also will be useful for our support programs, such as county commissioners, county Extension board members, legislators, regents, our Congressional delegation and perhaps people in USDA," Vacin says.

The Kansas State University Extension Service information staff plans to send single copies to the director and information head of the Cooperative Extension Service in each state.

Others interested in getting a copy may write to Gary Vacin, Extension Editor, Kansas Cooperative Extension Service, Umberger Hall, KSU, Manhattan, KA 66506. Or call (913) 532-5804.

## "INSIDE USDA" NOT LIKE "INSIDE INFORMATION"

McGraw-Hill will begin publication of a new management newsletter called "Inside USDA." First issue is due out June 22.

The fancy flyer describes the newsletter as a "weekly intelligence briefing on federal agricultural, food and fiber policy."

Intended audience includes executives whose revenues or expenses are affected by USDA and its agencies.

"Inside USDA" will be edited by Mike Morrison, an old McGraw-Hill hand.

Morrison said recently that he's received nothing but the best treatment from USDA sources in the past, in contrast to treatment he gets in other agencies.

The flyer says "Inside USDA" is "different from any information service you have used in the past."

(One major difference between the McGraw-Hill newsletter and "Inside Information, published by USDA, is the cost.)

A subscription to "Inside USDA" will cost \$287 for the first year's subscription. Regular price will be \$337 a year.

## COST OF WRITING LETTERS CONTINUES UPWARD

The Dartnell Institute of Business Research reports that the cost of the average business letter cracked the \$6 barrier in 1980.

Dartnell states a business letter now costs an average of \$6.07, an increase of 8.6% over the 1979 cost.

It is nearly 100% increase over the \$3.05 figure established in 1970.

All aspects of the cost factors increased in 1980.

Increased salaries accounted for most of the increase. But material costs, especially paper products, contributed about 10% of the increase.

Alternative means of communication may be necessary, say the experts.

Efficiency experts suggest using the telephone whenever possible to save time and expense of writing a letter.

## NOTICE . . . . .

The date, volume and issue number were inadvertently left off the last issue of "Inside Information."

The date was April 24, Volume 3, No. 17, for those of you who are keeping file copies.

## TELECONFERENCING: IS THE MEDIUM THE MESSAGE?

Latest developments and techniques in teleconferencing was discussed at a recent monthly meeting of the Interagency Council of Citizen Participation in Washington.

Most interesting item was a description (and announcement) of Bell and Howell Satellite Network's new teleconferencing studio at L'Enfant Plaza in D.C.

Notices have gone to all new cabinet officials that this facility is available for use in talking simultaneously to employees in conference rooms in all 10 Federal Regional Council cities.

This new service, with encouragement from the National Telecommunications & Information Administration in the U.S. Department of Commerce and approval from General Services Administration, is supposed to offset needs for some meetings of the regional federal offices.

This new service is supposed to be much better and much less costly than the telephone company's current system--which is being phased out or completely revamped.

Difference is that Bell and Howell uses satellite communications while the telephone company relies on land lines.

Meanwhile, a proposal is being studied by USDA's Office of Governmental & Public Affairs to set up an audio teleconferencing center for use by the entire department.

## OPENING LINES.....

"Every speaker says he's 'glad to be here.' But when you're from Washington, D.C., people believe you're glad to be here--anywhere but Washington!"

--James Webster, former assistant secretary of agriculture for governmental and public affairs.

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\* DC 20250, or call (202) 447-7454. \*  
\* \* \* \* \*



## FORMER USDA OFFICIALS REMAIN ACTIVE

Three former top USDA public affairs officials are actively involved in information work.

Hal Taylor, who retired last October as USDA public affairs director, has signed on with the Rockefeller Foundation for a short stint in Indonesia.

He will start a training project for that nation's Ministry of Agriculture.

Edwin Goodpaster, former deputy assistant secretary for governmental and public affairs at USDA, has become editor of the Wilderness Society's magazine.

He'll be headquartered in Washington, D.C.

Meanwhile, James Webster, former assistant secretary for governmental and public affairs, has issued his 12th issue of his weekly "Food & Fiber Letter."

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## OVERSEAS FARM COOPERATIVES DESCRIBED

The latest annual report of the Agricultural Cooperative Development International describes developing farmer cooperatives and farm credit systems overseas.

The report carries a letter from Secretary John R. Block.

"I believe that improving the lot of the farmer in the developing countries does not mean additional competition for U.S. farmers, Secretary Block says.

"Rather, it creates opportunities for expanding the export market for our own agricultural products."

The 33-page glossy report summarizes several programs in nations around the world, and lists ACDI member organizations.

Copy of the report, "Developing Farmer Cooperatives and Farm Credit Systems Overseas," is available from ACDI headquarters, 201 Continental Building, 1012 Fourteenth Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20005

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## FLORIDA AG COMMUNICATOR HONORED

Francis Cooper, editor for the University of Florida agricultural experiment station and extension service from 1925-61, has been elected to the Florida Agricultural Hall of Fame.

Although retired from the University of Florida, Cooper has remained an active journalist who still has several articles published each month.

## SECOND COMMUNICATOR NAMED TO SES PROGRAM

The second USDA public affairs official has been selected to take part in USDA's senior executive service training program.

Stan Prochaska, acting assistant public affairs director, was among 50 USDA officials named by Secretary of Agriculture John R. Block to take part in the special program.

Nelson Fitton, head of USDA's publishing center, was selected last year and will complete the program later this year.

Candidates are nominated by their respective agencies.

Those selected have successfully completed extensive reviews and special exercise. The final candidates were approved by the department's Executive Resources Board (made up of assistant secretaries).

Currently, only public affairs official holding a senior executive service position in USDA is Claude Gifford, assistant public affairs director and acting assistant secretary for governmental and public affairs.

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## GRAPHIC ARTS MONOGRAPH AVAILABLE

To help USDA agencies obtain quality printing at the most competitive costs, the USDA Printing Center in the Office of Governmental & Public Affairs has published a "Graphic Arts Monograph."

It contains information which explains kinds of printing available, how it is procured and time necessary to produce a job.

"Printing problems can be reduced, printing time decreased, costs kept under control and quality enhanced when agencies follow sound management practices," says David Sutton, USDA acting assistant public affairs director for graphic arts.

"The key to timely quality printing is planning," he adds. "USDA Printing Center will help plan and procure printing needs."

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## ALL YOU EVER WANTED TO KNOW ABOUT HAMBURGER

USDA's Food Safety & Quality Service has published a flyer, "Hamburger--Questions and Answers."

The 8-page pocket-size folder answers 16 frequently asked questions about quality and safety of ground beef.

Copies may be obtained from the Information Staff, Food Safety & Quality Service, Room 3606-S, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. Or call (202) 447-5223.

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## HISPANICS SPEND MOST TIME WITH RADIO

When Spanish media are available, Hispanics spend the most time with radio.

This is followed by television, tapes and records, and finally Spanish-language newspapers.

That's what a study for the Gannett media organization found.

Content items appealing to most Hispanics are: Problems in schools, local economy, bilingual education, health/medical advice, "Good Samaritan" stories, how-to advice, etc.

They have less interest in national politics, local politics and government, editorials, and news about business.

Additional details from the study are contained in a 5-page report from Phil Villa-Lobos in USDA's Media Liaison Center, Room 409-A, or call at (202) 447-3008.

## "ANIMAL HEALTH IN AMERICAS" REPORT ISSUED

Proceedings of the Inter-American meeting on animal health has been published by the Pan American Health Organization.

The conference is a continuation of the Inter-American Meetings, at the ministerial level, on foot-and-mouth disease and zoonoses control, begun in 1968.

Representatives from 31 nations attended the meeting in Washington, D.C.

A copy of the 100-page publication may be obtained from the Pan American Health Organization, 525 Twenty-third Street, N.W., Washington, DC 20037.

Ask for "Animal Health in the Americas, 1980--Animals in Human Life," Scientific Publication No. 404

## GPO WORKFORCE DECLINES

Improved graphic arts technology in the past few years has reduced the number of individuals required to complete certain tasks within the U.S. Government Printing Office.

Under authorization granted by the U.S. Office of Personnel Management, GPO offered early optional retirements to eligible employees in certain occupations from October 1, 1980, to March 31, 1981

As a result of the program, 199 GPO employees took advantage of the "early-out" option. As of April 1 this year, there are about 6,600 persons employed by GPO on a nation-wide basis.

## ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS TEST UNDERWAY

The USDA electronic communications experiment is now well underway.

The test is a cooperative venture between USDA's Office of Governmental and Public Affairs and information staffs of USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service and Food Safety and Quality Service.

National USDA news releases are transmitted electronically by the USDA News Center to all five regional information offices administered by AMS (and which serve five USDA agencies).

Regional news releases, memorandums and reports between AMS, FSQS and GPA offices in Washington and the five regional offices also are transmitted via electronic means.

Two different computer systems are being tested during the experiment. One is the "Comet" system operated by USDA's Office of Operations and Finance. The other is the "Dialcom" system provided by Dialcom, Inc., a private time-sharing firm headquartered in the Washington, D.C. area.

UPI news stories (national, regional and state) also can be accessed through the Dialcom system.

USDA News Center (in GPA) often uses the Dialcom system to check latest UPI agricultural stories for use in the daily "AGa.m." news summary prepared for the Secretary and other top officials in USDA.

Lanier word processors are used as terminals by the five regional information offices, AMS, FSQS and GPA assistant public affairs director's office. Lexitron and Lanier units are used by the News Center.

## NEBRASKA HOLDS FAMILY SYMPOSIUM

The fourth annual national symposium on building family strengths will be held at the University of Nebraska at Lincoln May 13-15.

Dr. Bruno Bettelheim, internationally known authority on childhood, and famous for his work with autistic children at the University of Chicago, will be one of the keynote speakers.

The other is Dr. Karl Menninger, noted psychiatrist with the Menninger Foundation at Topeka, Kans, and author of ten books and currently writing three more.

Among other speakers is George B. Holcomb, of USDA's Publishing Center.

He will report on bio-feedback for stress mastery.